DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 222 812 CG 016 278

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TITLE Differentiation between Counseling Seekers and Non-Seekers on the Strong-Campbell Interest Inventory.
PUB DATE Apr 82
NOTE 7p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Eastern Psychological Association (53rd, Baltimore, MD, April 15-18, 1982).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *College Students; Comparative Analysis; *Counseling Services; Higher Education; *Individual Differences; *Interest Inventories; Life Style; *Participant Characteristics; Sex Differences; Student Attitudes; *Student Characteristics; Student Development
IDENTIFIERS *Strong Campbell Interest Inventory

ABSTRACT

A number of studies have differentiated between counseled and non-counseled students on a variety of instruments. College freshmen (N=48) who had been counseled for personal problems were compared with 48 non-counseled students on results from the Strong-Campbell Interest Inventory (SCII). Results showed that counseled students achieved significantly higher scores on the Academic Orientation Scale and the Investigative and Artistic themes of the SCII than students who had not sought counseling. Uncounseled students achieved significantly higher scores on the Enterprising theme than the counseled students. Men were more oriented toward mechanical and technical pursuits than women, while women were more oriented toward artistic interests, reflecting traditional sex role interests. The results indicate that the student who seeks personal counseling at a university counseling center is open to the kind of self-growth experience that counseling can provide. (Author/JAC)

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DIFFERENTIATION BETWEEN COUNSELING SEEKERS AND NON-SEEKERS ON THE STRONG-CAMPBELL INTEREST INVENTORY

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CG 016278

Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Eastern Psychological Association, Baltimore, MD, April 15-18, 1982.

(1) Title of Paper Differentiation between counseling seekers and non-seekers on the Strong-Campbell Interest Inventory

(2) Topical Session Preference General (Clinical), Clinical (Counseling), Clinical (Therapy)

(3) Problem or Major Purpose

The purpose of the present study was to compare students who came to a university counseling center for counseling for personal problems with noncounseled students on the Academic Orientation Scale and the General Occupational Themes of the Strong-Campbell Interest Inventory (SCII) (Campbell, 1977). A number of studies have differentiated counseled and noncounseled students on a variety of instruments (e.g., Bruch, 1977; Domino & DeGroote, 1978; Palladino & Domino, 1978; Rossmann & Kirk, 1970; Sprafkin, 1972; Tryon, 1978), and the present study sought to extend the knowledge of counseled and noncounseled students by examining their SCII scores.

The General Occupational Themes were developed by Holland (1973) who determined as a result of his experiences as a counselor that most people can be categorized in terms of six types or themes. The Realistic theme characterizes people who have mechanical and technical interests. The Investigative theme includes people who have analytic and scientific interests. The Artistic theme covers people who have self-expressive interests and interests in the arts. People who are interested in helping others are characterized by the Social theme while people with entrepreneurial and political interests are characterized by the Enterprising theme. Finally, the Conventional theme includes people who have clerical interests.

The General Occupational Themes are generally used in vocational counseling to match people to jobs; however, Holland proposed the themes as indicators of individuals' lifestyles. It seemed reasonable to assume that students who came for personal counseling would differ from those who didn't in terms of their interests and the ways in which they conducted their lives. The Academic Orientation Scale of the SCII was also included in the present analysis because it was expected that counseled and noncounseled students would differ in their satisfaction with and orientation toward school.

(4) Subjects and Procedure

Subjects were 96 students (48 women and 48 men) who had just completed their freshman year in college. Half of the students (24 women and 24 men) had come to the counseling center for personal counseling during their freshman year while the remaining 24 women and 24 men had never sought counseling at the center. All students had been administered the SCII as part of freshman orientation.

Two counseled students (one female and one male) and two control students were randomly selected from each letter of the alphabet. The counseled men were seen for an average of 6.21 sessions (standard deviation = 6.61) while the women were seen for an average of 4.12 sessions (standard deviation = 4.81). A log transformation was performed on the number of sessions because the means were approximately equal to the standard deviations. An analysis of variance was performed on the transformed data, and the difference between the numbers of sessions for men and women was not significant (F (1, 46) = 1.83, $p > .05$).

(5) Results or Findings

Students' SCII scores were analyzed via a Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) with 2 independent factors (Sex and Counseling) and 7 dependent

variables (Academic Orientation, Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional). A significant Sex effect was found (F (7, 86) = 3.12, $p < .007$). Univariate analyses of variance (ANOVA's) yielded significant differences on the Realistic (F (1, 92) = 6.02, $p < .02$) and Artistic (F (1, 92) = 10.13, $p < .003$) themes. Men (mean = 48.94, standard deviation = 9.38) scored higher than women (mean = 44.19, standard deviation = 8.52) on the Realistic theme while women (mean = 53.06, standard deviation = 8.95) scored higher than men (mean = 47.81, standard deviation = 10.04) on the Artistic theme.

The MANOVA also yielded a significant Counseling effect (F (7, 86) = 2.97, $p < .009$). Individual ANOVA's yielded significant effects for Academic Orientation (F (1, 92) = 13.63, $p < .002$). Investigative (F (1, 92) = 4.68, $p < .03$), Artistic (F (1, 92) = 9.12, $p < .004$), and Enterprising (F (1, 92) = 3.81, $p < .05$).

Counseled students (mean = 49.46, standard deviation = 13.78) scored higher on the Academic Orientation Scale than noncounseled students (mean = 38.17, standard deviation = 13.54). Students who were counseled also scored higher than noncounseled students on the Investigative (mean = 50.60, standard deviation = 9.29 versus mean = 45.69, standard deviation = 8.83) and Artistic (mean = 53,52, standard deviation = 9.49 versus mean = 47.35, standard deviation = 9.23) themes. Students who were not counseled scored higher than counseled students on the Enterprising theme (mean = 51.65, standard deviation = 8.33 versus mean = 48.17, standard deviation = 9.52).

The interaction term for the MANOVA was not significant. No further analyses were conducted.

(4) Implications and Conclusions

The sex differences found in the present study are consistent with those found for men and women-in-general on the General Occupational Themes of the SCII (Campbell, 1977). Men were more oriented toward mechanical and technical pursuits than women while women were more oriented toward artistic interests than men. These differences appear to reflect traditional gender-role interests in the present sample.

The SCII General Occupational profiles of freshman students who sought personal counseling were those of almost "ideal" students who were more involved in school (Academic Orientation) and more open to investigating themselves and the world around them (Artistic and Investigative themes) than students who didn't seek counseling. The current counseled students had values which were more similar to professionals who teach and perform college counseling than noncounseled students. The counseled students don't fit the negative stereotype found by King, Newton, Osterlund, and Barber (1973) and Parish and Kappes (1979) of students who seek counseling.

On the other hand, freshmen who didn't seek counseling were less oriented to academics and more inclined toward economic aims. Students who score high on the Enterprising scale and low on Academic Orientation tend to do poorly in school because their interests are not suited to the academic environment (Holland, 1973). This current group of freshmen will be followed throughout their college career to verify this.

The present results apply only to freshmen, and further study should be made of students from all four years of college. In summary, the results indicate that the student who seeks personal counseling at the college or university counseling center is open to the kind of self-growth experience which counseling can provide.

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